

\$7.95M in bonds OKd for water project

Thursday September 6, 2012 11:49 AM By Emily Ngo



Town of Oyster Bay Town hall Photo credit: Nicole Bartoline

Oyster Bay Town officials have signed off on \$7.95 million in bonds for Bethpage Water District capital improvements, many of them to combat a toxic plume.

In a unanimous 7-0 vote on Tuesday, board members approved the financing of such projects as expanded and improved water treatment capabilities at three well sites, new well-pumping facilities and the replenishing of reserve funds used to construct a well site, according to district documents and district officials.

An addendum to the district's capital improvement plan was made in March as a response to new water quality data on volatile organic compound contamination and as preparation for future water quality degradation. It called for \$7.95 million in addition to the \$13.9 million in bonds allocated in 2009 through the town. The capital improvement plan was adopted in 2009 because of increases in volatile organic compounds that affected some of the water supply wells.

At the Tuesday town board meeting, Anthony Sabino, attorney for the district called it district "the last line of defense" against an underground plume of industrial solvents emanating from what is now the Northrop Grumman manufacturing facility. The district next month marks its third year of negotiations with the Northrop Grumman Corp. and the U.S. Navy, which owned part of the property, seeking repayment of funds used in combating contamination, said Sabino, of Mineola.

District superintendent Michael Boufis said Wednesday the district floats bonds for its improvements to immediately address the toxic threat. "If we didn't spend this money and do the upgrades that we've been doing, we would have violations," he said. The district expects its first offer from the Navy this week, Sabino said.

The Massapequa, Bethpage and South Farmingdale water districts have jointly written Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, saying the plume threatens 33 public water supply wells.

